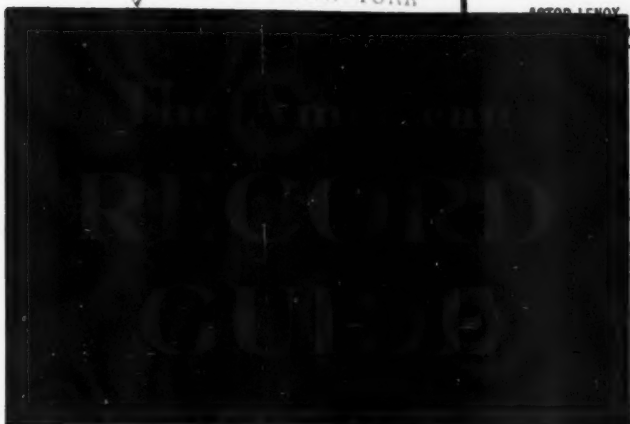


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VOLUME 20, No. 5



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The American
**RECORD
GUIDE**



JANUARY 1954

Volume XX, No. 5

formerly **The American Music Lover**

With the inflowing tide of the New Year may the message of the Wise Men "Peace on Earth" bring all men of good will closer together.

IT BEHOOVES us to thank all those friendly readers who included us in their personal greeting messages for Christmastime and the New Year. There is a bond in friendship for music and its spiritual solace which prompts men to such personal gestures which are far more meaningful than gifts. Emerson once said that "the only gift is a portion of thyself," and personal greetings are of the nature of self, more often so than gifts.

Reviewing an art, particularly that most personal of all arts—music—can promote a friendly feeling between writer and reader even though mutual agreement does not exist. He is an understanding man who can accept a difference of opinion without being provoked to thoughts of violence. It is, of course, quite another matter when mutual concurrence exists between writer and reader. But is there not a source of mental stimulation in disagreement in matters of art and artistry that can prompt us to revalue our first emotions? Since the supreme determining and selecting power of man is the mind, not the emotions, should not the former influence us as to what we wish or desire?

Disagreement can stimulate the mind, which is the true aspect of self or personality, to reassess the values of any art, to open the way to wider experience. This alone is the source from which a dissenter should seek to justify his preferences.

A Happy New Year to all.

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January, 1954

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LP Re-Issues

THERE are many who are still favorably disposed toward older recordings. Not all listeners today are dominated by reproductive realism; there are those who place artistic values above high-fidelity reproduction. Undoubtedly, the friendliest adherents of older recordings are the operatic enthusiasts, though there are others who are interested in instrumental and orchestral performances by famous artists of yesteryear. Re-issues of earlier recordings of Felix Weingartner and Sir Thomas Beecham cannot fail to find a receptive audience, nor can re-issues of vocal selections by such famous singers as Claudia Muzio, Elisabeth Schumann or Heinrich Schlusnus, to name but a few recently honored by LP re-issues.

There was wisdom in Columbia's recent LP re-issues of its older opera sets in the low priced Entré series. Columbia's engineering of these sets has been more successful than any similar outputs by other companies. Employing the modern "echo" chamber, which supplies reverberation comparable to a live concert hall, Columbia's resourceful engineers have been able to give the singers a more realistic presence. Results in many cases have supplied a more rounded quality to the voices. Such a set as Entré EL-6, which offers the complete *Manon* by Massenet, stands up favorably against a more modern version because of the improvement in reproduction as well as the overall finer singing it offers. Headed by the late Germaine Feraldy, long a favorite Manon with Paris audiences, and Joseph Rogatchewsky, one of the finest Des Grieux of his time, one hears stylistic lyric singing all too rare these days. The balance of the cast are all competent singers and the orchestra direction of Elie Cohen is highly proficient.

Charpentier's "Louise"

It remains a moot question whether a complete version of Charpentier's *Louise* will be realized during its composer's lifetime. He is said to demand an exorbitant fee. Entré album EL-7 offers an abridged version in which the singing alone might defy competition in our own time. Ninon Vallin, Georges Thill and Andree Pernet are the main participants—gifted singers all, who were in their prime when this recording was first issued back in the 1930s. The expressive quality of Vallin's singing places her among the foremost exponents of *Louise*, and Thill has no competitor today of whom we know.

Entré disc RL-3092 offers Highlights from Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, sung by Marthe Nespoulos, Alfred Maguenat, Hector Dufranne and Claire Croiza. The recording dates from the late 1920s but few would believe this with Columbia's engineered revamping. Maguenat was a famous Pelléas when he made these selections. It was he who sang opposite Mary Garden when this opera was presented in the years following World War I by the Chicago Opera Company. Dufranne was the original Golaud in the premiere

performance of the opera in 1902, and some quarter of a century later he was still a leading exponent of the role. Croiza, one of the most gifted mezzos of her day has never had a true competitor on records in her singing of the "Letter" aria. This is a collector's record which many will want.

The Entré re-issues of Boito's *Mefistofele* and Giordano's *Andrea Chenier* (sets EL-9 and EL-10) are much improved by modern engineering. Mafalda Favero is a more impassioned Margherita than Urania's Rosetta Noli and Antonio Melandri a more assured Faust than Gianni Poggi. Nazareno De Angelis, the Mefistofele, was past his prime when he sang in this recording but his interpretation of the part is more vital and dramatic than Giulio Neri. Luigi Maizini as Chenier is satisfactory, while the famous Carlo Galeffi as Gerard remains unmatched today. Lina Bruna Rasa, the late Mascagni's *amica caro*, who sang Santuzza in the Mascagni directed performance of *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Victor set LCT-6000), is a knowing dramatic Maddalena but without the stylistic finesse and vocal beauty of Renata Tebaldi. This set, complete on 2 discs, is a strong competitor for Capitol's new issue on 3 discs.

The Entré re-issue of Verdi's *Aida*, featuring the late Giannina Arangi-Lombardi, Arnoldo Lindi, Armando Borgioli and Tancredi Pasero offers a competent performance a notch or two above some other recent Italian issues. The soprano, a favorite in Italy in her time, possessed a dramatic voice which was not beset with the inequalities of so many of the Aidas on record. Only Tebaldi eclipses her artistically. Some portions of this set suggest worn masters but on the whole the record-

▲AMONG the recordings reviewed in our December issue, the following deserve inclusion in our list of the best LP Record Highlights of the Year.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphonies Nos. 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8;* Toscanini and NBC Symphony Orch. (RCA Victor). (Dec., p. 111).

HINDEMITH: *Symphonic Melamorphoses on Themes of Weber;* **SCHOENBERG:** *Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 16;* Kubelik and Chicago Sym. Orch. (Mercury). (Dec., p. 120).

FALLA: *Complete Piano Works;* José Echaniz (Westminster). (Dec., p. 132).

SCHUBERT: *Piano Sonata in A minor, Op. 42;* Wilhelm Kempff (London). (Dec., p. 133).

STRAVINSKY: *The Rake's Progress;* Metropolitan Opera Soloists, Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Stravinsky (Columbia). (Dec., p. 115).

(Continued on page 175)

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Guide



Becket wrestling with his conscience before the people of Canterbury

THE SPOKEN WORD

By Robert Daniel Olson

IT IS warming indeed to think how far the Spoken Word has traveled on records since the days before LP, when any speech other than Jacques' "Seven Ages of Man" was hard come by.

Many of the recent sets are of course this side the immaculate. Not every actor can be Olivier in all his subtlety, any more than every pianist can be Solomon in all his glory. And the ear still must accept necessary evils in the cutting of the Shakespearean opera. But on the whole, verbal music is finding allies everywhere in these often toneless times.

One of the best friends any word of wonder ever had is the Library of Congress. It is hard to conceive of any personal record library that would not be basically enriched by Robert Frost's splendid reading of 22 of his rarest, sparest poems (PL6) or by T. S. Eliot's reading of the entire *Waste Land*, plus "Ash-

Wednesday," "Landscapes," and "Sweeney Among the Nightingales," (PL3). Both voices take a little getting used to, but once "got" cannot be got out of the mind.

Another majestic library notion is Columbia's \$100 Bookshelf (SL-190)—comprising 12 LP singles (available separately) of contemporary prose authors reading from their own works. All choices are first-rate craftsmen—thanks to editor Goddard Lieberson—no clinker among them: John Collier, Christopher Isherwood, all the Sitwells, Edna Ferber, Truman Capote, John Steinbeck (magnificent), Aldous Huxley, William Saroyan, Katherine Anne Porter, and Somerset Maugham. In these, music bows slightly in the direction of historical curiosity. Perhaps the noblest instrument among them is the voice of Sir Osbert Sitwell, sounding the fluted rhythms and riches of an account of a sadly obsolete kind of

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man—his father. James Joyce sought a father in the world. Sir Osbert found a world in his father, a world he shares in this tremendous excerpt from *Left Hand, Right Hand*.

It is hardly possible to have too much of John Gielgud on record. So one welcomes Victor's 90-minute *Hamlet* (LM 6007) despite functional deficiencies probably traceable to its origin as a Bard-popularizing broadcast two years ago. When Gielgud did the prose Hamlet, Valentine, in *Love for Love*, he achieved a vocal and dramatic mordancy previously excluded by the almost too-sweet perfection of his voice. Later Hamlets of his have extended this inner range. This is the best reading of all, giving us the Voltaire as well as the Tennyson in the verse. Dorothy McGuire's Ophelia doesn't quite make the weight.

An uneven "Macbeth"

Pamela Brown's Gertrude, however, is astonishingly good. Her speciality being high comedy, one might have thought the heavily stylized voice to be full of brains to submit to Gertrude's sullen lethargy. Her Lady Macbeth (Victor LM-6010) contrarily, is astonishingly mediocre. This may easily be her participation with Alec Guinness, as Macbeth, in the general self-consciousness of a production too obviously aimed at "being different from the last Old Vic one." Though Guinness is too mild, too whispery, too "real" throughout, one can hear in all the unevenness certain single images and lines more movingly expressed than any other recorded Macbeth has managed. "Amen stuck in my throat" is worth the price of submission to "Hang those that talk of fear," which comes out in the unctuous rectitude characterizing half-time pep talks of high-school football coaches accustomed to hanging their banners on more inward walls. When this nervous Bellona's bridegroom speaks of having supped full of horrors, he might be thinking of some unclean Automat; yet so often he touches immortal chords immortally. George Rose is to the liquor-breath the Porter

DeQuincey wrote about but probably never saw.

There is also, in the Old Vic's *Romeo and Juliet* Victor (LM-6110) too much easy reliance on the sudden effects deemed wise by sudden contrasts between whispered periods and rousing starts. Or maybe it only seems so, because the starts never really arouse. It takes two to contrast as well as two to tango. The principals (*Limelight's* Claire Bloom and *Salome's* Alan Badel) seem to suffer from a directorial bug for "new readings," gnawing prosaically at the vitals of the verse. Whenever an equivocation is possible, it is leapt upon, coming and going, as: Romeo's "Wilt thou leave me? [long, long pause] so unsatisfied?" This sort of subtlety goes nowhere, except the rounds of the Green Rooms. And it is a distinct mar on the sustained gloss of an otherwise enjoyably fresh and youthful projecting. Traditionally, and rightly, "jests" gets the bang in "He jests at scars that never felt a wound." But here we are embarrassed by a baying stress on "woooooound". Let us have our shock of recognition, in familiar passages, when there is no harm in it.

"John Brown's Body"

John Brown's Body lies a-smouldering on Columbia SL-181—a fiery, faithful rendering of a fine stage reading. Judith Anderson and Raymond Massey speak beautifully. The latter's anguished soliloquy as Lincoln should be on anybody's list of Great Moments.

But the nasal frailties of Mr. Massey's voice can descend to the level of whining—as borne out by an older set, *The Tempest* (Polymusic 5001/2). It is a noble thing to be the perfect Lincoln, but this gifted actor should attempt the intricacies of Prospero's convoluted allegories only for money. The album is notable chiefly for the ingratiating and world-eschewing songs by Paul Bowles.

Another less-recent set boasts the much-discussed *Medea* which Judith Anderson asked Robinson Jeffers to adapt for her. (Decca LP-9000). Sense would suggest that a sincere adaptation of a work so clearly satiric in design must

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split in two. Nonetheless, the power in performance is so overwhelming that sense is once more humbled by sensibility. Jeffers succeeded in doing the almost-impossible; and Miss Anderson, as all the world knows, serves him superbly.

If perfection may be defined as the absence of discernable fault, plus the attainment of all foreseeable felicity, the two drama sets that introduce The Angel Playhouse are perfect. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* (Angel 3505) and Wilde's *The Importance of Being Ernest* (3404) must fill anybody's playbill superbly, the latter even wiping out the bad taste in the ear left by the cacophony of the recent American recording around Maurice Evans (Theatre set).

Both the T. S. Eliot and the Oscar Wilde tone poems are major works. Both require more than one or two hearings for even minimum understanding or maximum enjoyment—it being understood, of course, that art's maxima are limitless. Both are, in their fashion, supreme statements of a denial of human in so far as human importance.

Robert Donat's rounded reading of the martyred Archbishop Thomas Becket is, in cadence and sense, unequivocal. Even those of us antipathetic to Eliot's and Becket's argument find ourselves as sympathetic to the warmth of his projection as to the beauty of the language in which it is projected. There is no doubting the moving sincerity of the argument, enunciated most clearly in Becket's Christmas Sermon: "A martyrdom is always the design of God, for his Love of men, to warn them and to lead them, to bring them back to his ways. It is never the design of man." The word *man* here is spat out like the worm in The Apple. We are to admire Becket on his own terms—or none. And, so graceful, so unsentimental, so beautiful streams Christ's blood in these firmaments: we do! The Chorales, and indeed every syllable, are immaculate.

Is the Wilde farce too brittle, too much a veneer piece, to stand up under such weighty mating? Perhaps the first two



Pamela Brown and John Gielgud in "The Importance of Being Ernest"

or three times one is prisoner of its musical inanities, one does not realize that there is more of Moliere and Voltaire in this witty score than meets the ear. Here, owners of the album, some upteenth playing hence, will have the advantage. This auditor has nearly every speech by heart, but is still being surprised by new fun and further fathoms in its deceptive shallows.

Lady Bracknell, John Worthing, Algernon, Cecily—such delightfully light-headed and unreal folk have all been pushed through Alice's Looking Glass, not by their own inadequacies, but by their own highly logical and adequate adhering to certain inanities of the real world. We do not recall, hearing, before, Cecily's addendum to Pope's "Little learning" advice. Oh, Canon Chasuable is very wise, she says. "He has never written a book, so you can imagine how much he knows." That Cecily has never read a book does not bar this shaft from the higher criticism.

Roland Culver's Algernon, Celia Johnson's Cecily and Aubrey Mather's Chasuable join tour-de-forces with Sir John Gielgud's Worthing, Dame Edith Evans, Lady B., Jean Cadell's Miss Prism, Pamela Brown's Gwendolen, as staples

on the richest thespian bill-of-fare our day affords. Every "nonsensical" nuance shimmers in the memory forever—or for a long time, indeed.

Italian Classicists

ITALIAN CLASSICAL SYMPHONISTS:

Concerto for Orchestra in D minor, Op. 5, No. 7 (Albinoni); Concerto Grosso No. 2 (Corelli-Geminiani); Violin Concerto No. 2 in C and Symphony in G (Sammartini). Haydn Society LP disc 74. *Fifth Cantata for the Fridays in Lent Sammartini.* Disc 75. *Orfeo (Pergolesi); Andromaque (Cambini); Overture No. 2 (Galuppi).* Disc 76. *Piano Concerto (Giordani); Oboe Concerto (Valentini); Symphony in C minor (Brunetti).* Disc 77. *Concerto for Piano and Violin in E flat (Viotti); Symphony in G minor (Brunetti).* Disc 78. *Horn Concerto in E flat (Rosetti); Symphony in F, Op. 35, No. 4 (Boccherini).* Disc 79. Performed by the Italian Chamber Orchestra conducted by Newell Jenkins with soloists. Price \$5.95 each disc.

▲THE Haydn Society issues these six discs in a folder but they can also be bought separately. This effort to resurrect a group of famous 18th-century symphonists from the pages of history is a laudable endeavor, for the world has not grown so old or so musically sophisticated that the poised art of the classical era, with its lively rhythmic accents and its dignity in expression, no longer appeals. One has to live intimately with this art to appreciate it fully and only through recordings can this be realized. Classical sculpture and painting of the same period has not suffered the fate that music has. Because the works of the great survive—men like Haydn and Mozart—is no reason to forget completely some of the lesser figures of the time, many of whom justifiably enjoyed a prestige in their day.

Of the twelve composers represented, Sammartini (1701-75) was one of the forefathers of the classical symphonies.

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He helped to establish a new style lifting "the monotony created by the use of the old baroque materials in a treatment unsuitable to them with a rhythmic freedom that instantly enlivened the fabric," as Paul Henry Lang has said. His *Cantata*, with its lively accents, is a most effective work of its kind, well sung and well played. His symphony does not have the distinguishing profile of the two by Brunetti (1745-1808), but it is a diverting opus which ends with a minuet—undoubtedly to satisfy audiences of the day who were not yet ready for anything more serious. His *Violin Concerto* is in the same vein; virtuosity is eschewed. The works of Albinoni and Geminiani have the seriousness of purpose that was the keynote to Corelli's art. The last three discs offer the most rewarding music—the fine *Oboe Concerto* of Valentini, the ingratiatingly lilting symphonies of Brunetti the engaging bright piano concerto of Giordani, the fine *Double Concerto* of Viotti, the *Horn Concerto* by Rosetti and the symphony by Boccherini with one of his loveliest slow movements. The Cambini and Pergolesi cantatas introduce these composers in a different way than we have known them on records. The latter is one of Pergolesi's best works, exceptionally well sung by Alfredo Bianchini. Marilyn Tyler, who sings well in the Sammartini cantata, tends to be shrill in the Cambini and stylistically closer to the 19th century than to the baroque character of the music. The soloists in the instrumental works are all competent artists.

The orchestral playing suggests careful preparation and its tone is consistently pleasant. Newell Jenkins, a young conductor on a fellowship in Italy, founded the orchestra this past year and has given numerous concerts throughout that country. He phrases knowingly and has a nice rhythmic fluency though very little feeling for nuance of line. His is healthy, extroverted music-making. Haydn Society's engineering is excellent; there is plenty of life and a fine prospectus on instrumental and vocal timbre.

—P.H.R.

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SWAGGERING ROMANTICISM

Berlioz's "Lelio" — A Review

By Jacques Barzun

BERLIOZ: *Lélio* or *The Return to Life* (Lyric Monodrama), *Op. 14B*; Orchestra and Chorus of the New Paris Symphony Association with Andre Charpak (Narrator), Joachim Kerol (tenor) and Gabriel Bacquier (baritone), Kieth Humble (piano), Henri Druart (clarinet), Bernard Galais (harp). Rene Leibowitz (conductor). Vox LP PL-8250, \$5.95.

▲OF ALL the works of Berlioz that one might look for on discs, *Lélio* is surely the one a devotee had the least reason to expect: it is a series of early pieces tied together by soliloquies in a rhetoric that no longer moves us. The audiences of 1832 applauded precisely these spoken tirades; what holds us is the music. It was therefore courageous of René Leibowitz and Vox to give us the "work" in representative form, that is, musically complete and with its verbal links adroitly cut to a functional minimum. One regrets only that a passage about critics where Berlioz's humor suddenly shines out of the melodrama has been discarded too, but that is a trifle.

First called *Melologue* according to a genre in vogue at the time, *Lélio* was put together by Berlioz during his uncongenial stay in Rome from 1831 to 1832. The score comprises six numbers and calls for a tenor, a baritone, a clarinet, and a pianist, in addition to full chorus and orchestra. We hear first a ballad with piano accompaniment on the words of Goethe's *Der Fischer*; then a somber "Chorus of Shades," a "Brigand Song," a "Hymn of Bliss" followed by a short instrumental "echo" of this lyric, and finally a sizable fantasia on Shakespeare's *Tempest*. Except for the Hymn and its echo, the music has no formal coherence from next to next, yet as always

with Berlioz, the suite is artistically balanced, both in weight and in sonority. For example, the piano timbre which we hear in the opening number is heard again in the last, and the rhythmic pulse and volume of the Brigand song is matched by corresponding elements in the closing section of the Fantasia. By such means, subtly multiplied and distributed, the composer makes us feel that he is entitled to collect these essays under one rubric.

I call them essays advisedly, for three of the numbers come from Berlioz's Rome Price cantatas, and the rest are contemporary with them. Hence, apart from a few details, the music of this "sequel" to the "*Symphonie Fantastique*" was mostly written before the symphony, which is to say before 1830; and it shows that Berlioz was master of his style at twenty-four when he flabbergasted the Prize jury with his *Death of Orpheus*. This was the cantata set in 1827 and it contains both the theme of the "Hymn of Bliss" that we have in *Lélio* and the instrumental "echo" entire; this last being probably the first impressionistic tone poem in western music.

Two years later, Berlioz was still competing, this time on a scene about Cleopatra's death. The resulting cantata (sung last year in New York) is a little masterpiece, of which *Lélio* retains the final Chorus of Shades, adapted to new words by Berlioz himself. Again the music has prophetic value: it makes us think at once of the final chorus of priests bemoaning the death of Dido in *The Trojans*.

In the present performance, the next piece, the "Brigand Song," seems the least successful. It makes one long for the perfected rhythms and contrasts of the

last movement in *Harold in Italy*. But some of our disappointment must be attributed to lack of conviction on the part of the singer, a milk-fed brigand who seems to be saying: "Don't take me for a bad man, dear friends, I am a baritone in good repute." Under Munch in Strasbourg twenty years ago, the song sounded really savage; the chief roared and warbled lewdly, his men broke in with ruffianly vulgarity, and the orchestra acted like the resounding hills, coarser even than the human voice—and Munch's open-air audience cheered.

By an unfortunate reversal of roles, it is the tenor who in the present recording acts robusto. Disregarding nearly all Berlioz's dynamics, he stresses words at random and reaches climaxes two or three bars ahead of the indicated point—all with a painful anguish in his voice. Because he sings true we are able to deduce the diverse lyric qualities of the ballad and the hymn, but we do not derive them instantaneously and thereby miss the enchantment.

Orchestra and chorus make up for the soloists' deficiencies, and in the fresh, spring-like "Tempest" fantasy, delicate and vigorous by turns, M. Leibowitz and his forces outdo themselves. This section, too, will suggest many thoughts to the Bertioz connoisseur. The "storm" scene will strike him as utterly unlike Beethoven and strongly anticipatory of "The Royal Hunt." Elsewhere he will recognize material that he has come to associate with the *King Lear* and *Cor-sair* overtures which date from the same period. There is no doubt that under the torment of his love affair with the bewitching "Ariel," Camille Moke, Berlioz obsessively returned to certain themes. Again, the listener will note how Stravinsky comes on before Caliban, and how the divided violins which in Wagner's *Lohengrin* Prelude symbolize a soul swimming in the pure ether, here introduce the spirits of air led by—Ariel once more: the *Tempest* piece was written for Mlle. Moke and performed for her on November 7, 1830.

For all these evocations and for the music itself we may be grateful to Vox 150

and their French conductor-composer. One is indebted also to M. André Charpak for his admirable rendering of the words. And the fact that these are given a clear and correct translation by Mr. Charles Stanley, who also provides excellent notes, is sufficiently unusual to deserve particular praise.

AT LAST, ORFF

ORFF: *Carmina Burana*; Elfride Troetschel (soprano), Hans Braun (baritone), Paul Kuen (tenor) and Karl Hoppe (baritone) with the Bavarian Radio Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Eugen Jochum. Decca LP DL-9706, \$5.85.

▲DECCA merits congratulations for making available this close-up Deutsche Grammophon recording of a superb and stimulating work by a contemporary master whose name is all but unknown on this side of the Atlantic.

Carl Orff is not a reactionary in the same way that most modernists are. For him, neo-classicism does not look far enough into the past. He goes to the middle ages and beyond, even to antiquity, for his highly personal esthetic. Indeed his rhythms are absolutely basic, his harmonies plainly diatonic or modal, and he rarely develops his themes at all in any conventional sense. He writes superbly for the voice but he doesn't give a hoot for articulation as a concomitant of verisimilitude; he conceives of words only as foils in the exploitation of musical materials and no matter if the text happens to make little literal sense. His orchestrations are elementary in the extreme, but contrived with a skill that is unsurpassed in our day and absolutely original in its deployment of percussion for ostinatos and similar effects. Witalhe is an artist of the very front rank and it is high time that his works are finding their way to our shores. Certainly his stature bulks large alongside that of his compatriot, Gottfried von Einem, whose setting of Kafka's

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Der Prozess was a dismal failure at New York City Center this past season.

Orff's major achievement is a tryplicity of so-called scenic cantatas collectively entitled *Trionfi*. The first of the three, all of which are well known in Europe, is *Carmina Burana*. It is identified on the absurdly inadequate jacket notes as a cycle of secular songs, but in fact the text has a considerable continuity even if the profane poems which comprise it are not strided in any patently dramatic order. All of the verse dates from the 13th century. As far as we know it was set down by Bavarian monks, some of whom elected vulgar Latin and others an equally colloquial provincial dialect then current. The disparity of language did not faze Orff, and his razor sharp sense of theater keeps the inherent incongruity from intruding on the listener. The literary content has to do mostly with spring, liquor, ladies and love, as medieval texts are apt to. Decca thankfully has included English translations of the two dozen poems, but only at the price of cutting the annotative space to a few inches, which is a shame.

The music itself, however, is far more provocative and persuasive than any prose could be. The estimable Jochum has built an altogether splendid performance, so alive that it fairly leaps out of one's speaker. Elfride Troetschel's exquisite singing of the latter amatory sections is especially praiseworthy. Whether or not the operaphile is cordially disposed to *avant-garde* concepts of the lyric art, *Carmina Burana* demands his respectful attention. It will be rewarded.

—James Lyons

OPERA SPOTLIGHT

BELLINI: *I Puritani* (Opera in 3 acts);

Maria Meneghini Callas (Elvira), Giuseppe Di Stefano (Arturo), Rolando Panerai (Riccardo), Nicola Rossi-Lemeni (Giorgio), Aurora Cattelani (Enrichetta di Francia), Angelo Murchiali (Bruno), Carlo Forti (Gualtiero), Orchestra and Chorus of La Scala, Milan, conducted by Tullio

Serafin. Angel Records LP set 3502C, 3 discs, \$17.85.

PUCCINI: *Tosca* (Opera in 3 Acts); Maria Meneghini Callas (*Tosca*), Giuseppe Stefano (Mario), Tito Gobbi (Scarpia), Franco Calabrese (Angelotti), Melchiorre Luise (Sagrestano), Angelo Mercutiali (Spoletta), Dario Caselli (Sciarrone e Carceriere), Alvaro Cordova (Pastore), Orchestra and Chorus of La Scala conducted by Victor De Sabata. Angel Records LP set 3508B, 2 discs, \$11.90.

▲TO CONSIDER reproduction before performance cannot be regarded these days as putting the cart before the horse. In the case of these recordings, we encounter such extraordinary reproduction that it deserves the introductory chorus. Those, like myself, who have been fortunate enough to have heard opera in Italy's famed La Scala, know the wonderful acoustical properties of the house. These have been faithfully caught in these recordings with the result that these two operatic sets have not only realistic presence of singers but an orchestral presence unusual in the annals of recorded opera. Realism is rightly handled in these sets—in the case of *Tosca*, the cantata sung off stage in the second act is off-stage and so too is the boy soprano's voice singing the Shepherd's Song in the last act.

A revival of Bellini's *I Puritani* could not be successful without some truly great singing. Bellini wrote the opera for two of the greatest singers of the time (1835)—the sensational Milanese soprano Giulia Grisi and the equally sensational Italian tenor Giovanni Rubini, both of whom had phenomenal high tones. The opera has never had much success in America since Patti, at sixteen, sang it at the Academy of Music in New York. Sembrich was featured in the role at the Metropolitan in 1883 and Barrientos in 1917. Despite a cast which contained Barrientos, Lazaro, De Luca and Mardones, the 1917 revival had only four performances. Nor did the Hammerstein revival in 1909 for Tetravzzini and Constantino fare better. *I Puritani*

has a most unfortunate libretto—its story, laid in the time of the wars between Cromwell and the Stuarts, has to do with lovers separated by warring factions. The lover, a fighter for the Stuarts, forsakes his Puritan bride to help the widow of Charles I of France escape from the Puritan stronghold where she is a prisoner and where he—despite his allegiance—has been permitted to come to marry the daughter of an enemy. Arturo steals his bride's wedding veil to spirit the Queen away, thereupon his bride-to-be goes mad. In the end, the Stuarts are defeated and Arturo is allowed to return to marry his Elvira, who promptly recovers from her madness. This was a period in which mad scenes were favored; Donizetti was to come up with his *Lucia* within the year. Elvira's mad scene, "Qui la voce," is definitely on a higher level than Lucia's. Indeed, the opera has much, musically, that is representative of Bellini's best in expressive lyricism, albeit steeped in sentimentality.

Italy has been more friendly to *I Puritani* than any other country with a host of acclaimed Elvira's and an Arturo in the late Bonci that was much favored. Callas seems to have been made for this role. She has the requisite qualities for the part—sentiment and technical brilliance. Vocally, she is sensational as Elvira and most impressive as Tosca. Her voice recalls both Ponselle's and Raisa's. Indeed, the thrill of her singing is on a par with that of Raisa in person. True, there are vocal inequalities in her style—a tendency to excessive portamenti and sometimes scooping, but vocally she is more assured as Elvira and Tosca than she was as *Gioconda*.

Di Stefano's Arturo offers the best singing I have heard from him to date. His high C sharps are a bit edgy but they are not strained like Conley's were. There is a heroic quality to his voice which he never revealed at the Metropolitan. Rolando Panerai, a new baritone, is a sympathetic Riccardo. His is a richly expressive voice. Rossi-Lemeni, as Giorgio, is uneven in the beginning but authoritative as the opera progresses.

The balance of the cast are highly competent. The La Scala Chorus are excellent—we should have such a chorus in this country. The conducting of Serafin conveys a knowing musical mind which logically becomes the guiding spirit without centering undue attention on the mild mannered orchestra of Bellini.

As *Tosca*, Callas proves the versatility of her artistry—one might say the part had been made for her were there not so many reminders of the great Toscas of past and present on records. Hers is a more dramatically rich Tosca than Tebaldi's, whose sentient artistry cannot, however, be forgotten. But Callas is more fortunate in her companions than Tebaldi. DiStefano is the finest Cavardossi since Gigli and Tito Gobbi is one of the greatest Scarpia's, in my estimation, of all times. The success of this performance cannot be laid at the door of any one singer, for the master mind that has molded this performance into the most vital and exciting *Tosca* on records is De Sabata, and it was he, I am told, who inspired the singers to give of their best, which verily they do. —P.H.R.

GIORDANO: *Andrea Chenier* (Opera in 4 Acts); Jose Soler (Chenier), Renata Tebaldi (Maddalena de Coigny), Ugo Savarese (Carlo Gerard), Irma Colsanti (La Contessa de Coigny and Madelon), Ines Marietta (La Mulatta Bersi), Pier Luigi Latinucci (Mathieu), others, Orchestra of Radio Italiana, Turin, and the Cetra Chorus conducted by Arturo Basile. Cetra LP set C-1224, 3 discs, \$17.85.

▲IN his review of the Urania set (see June 1952 issue), Max de Schauensee appropriately said that *Andrea Chenier* "depends more than most operas, on vocal glamor from its principal singers, such as the famous all-star casts formerly heard at the Metropolitan." Here, the vocal glamor is provided only by Renata Tebaldi, the balance of the cast are competent but not similarly exciting. Jose Soler, like Sarri in the Urania set, lacks the brilliance "of a truly satisfying Chenier," yet was it brilliance that made

Gigli so effective in this role? Perhaps it is a combination of expressive intensity as well as brilliance which makes a great Chenier. Soler is definitely a notch above Luigi Marini in the Columbia re-issue, but he is not comparable to Gigli in the HMV set. Incidentally, in the latter set slated for re-issue on LP in this country, Maria Caniglia is the Maddalena and Gino Bechi is the Gerard. The former does not compare to Tebaldi but, the latter is better than Savarese though he does not compare to Carlo Galeffi in the Columbia set. Savarese has a metallic voice and a similar "notable breadth" to Urania's Serra, but his Gerard is lacking in sympathy. Considering that the HMV set dates from the early 1940s, the superb recording of this issue with its splendid orchestral direction and its richly realistic instrumental sound may well make it more desirable to most listeners. Certainly Tebaldi is a strong drawing card with her dramatically puissant and expressive singing. All three of the principals here are histrionically successful, which compensates some in the men's cases for lack of vocal glamor. The minor parts are mostly satisfactorily sung.

—J N.

RAVEL: *L'Heure Espagnole* (Opera in 1 Act); Denise Duval (Concepcion), Jean Vieuille (Ramiro), Jean Giraudeau (Gonzalve), Charles Clavensy (Don Inigo Gomez), René Herent (Torquemada) Artists and Orchestra of the Opéra-Comique, Paris, under the direction of André Cluytens. Angel 35018 1 disc, \$5.95.

▲ANGEL records continue their triumphant march with this bright, idiomatic performance of Ravel's operatic masterpiece. By employing the admirably drilled forces of the Opéra-Comique they have insured listeners a reading of this score that fairly reaks of the theater. As Puccini used to say, *puzza di teatro*. Not a nuance is missed by the fine cast, and the conducting of André Cluytens, with the well-routined Comique orchestra at his disposal, makes you feel that here are musicians who know what *L'Heure* is all about.

January, 1954

Denise Duval is a perfect Concepcion. This role is more a matter of crisp diction and suggested atmosphere than one of vocal suavity, and in these matters Mlle. Duval would be hard to equal. Jean Vieuille (son of Felix Vieuille, creator of Arkel in *Pelléas*) does not fall into the blunder of making his muleteer, Ramiro, over-refined. Here is a properly blustering, resonant performance. The beautifully nuanced Gonzalve of Jean Giraudeau and the sonorous bass voice of Charles Clavensy, as his rival, Don Inigo Gomez, contribute to a cast whose salient quality is its ability to communicate.

The atmosphere of Spanish languor and the decidedly naughty implications are mirrored by a company, which has countless performances of *L'Heure Espagnole* under its belt.

The transparency of Ansermet's orchestral texture on the London disc is not equaled here. But the loss of refinement is also a gain in that the spirit of Ravel's opera is more realistically achieved. The contrast of Suzanne Danco's refined Concepcion with Miss Duval's salty performance might symbolize the difference between the two sets.

—M. de S.

Schoenberg Quartets

SCHOENBERG: *String Quartets No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 7, No. 2 in F Sharp Minor, Op. 10* (with Uta Graf, soprano), *No. 3, Op. 30, and No. 4, Op. 37*; **WEBERN:** *Five Movements for String Quartet, Op. 5*; **BERG:** *String Quartet, Op. 3*; the Juilliard String Quartet. Columbia LP set SL-188, \$17.85.

▲VARIABLE reproductive quality militates somewhat against a blanket endorsement of this set, but it is so welcome otherwise that one is inclined to be slightly more tolerant than usual. Columbia does not say when the performances were recorded, as it has been doing lately as a matter of routine, which suggests that the tapes are not as new as they

might be. So much for that, except to add that the sound is tolerable at its worst. Musically, perhaps, the same can be said. This is hardly the place to debate the relative immortality of such controversial scores but it is good to have them available in a single package because circulation, not critical encomiums, will preserve them if they deserve it. Briefly, the *Opus 7* is of course the most easily accessible (five or six earlier ones having been discarded, leaving this chronologically the first of the extant four). The traditional four movements are telescoped into one, but there is nothing telescoped about the structure, which is admittedly modelled on the opening movement of the *Eroica Symphony*. The *Opus 10* introduces the voice in its last two movements; Uta Graf sings the Stefan George text with as much persuasion as anyone could in the present performance. This work, dating from 1910, incorporates the composer's first experiment in suspended tonality, which was his way of reactivating the evolution of polyphony. A substantial academic interest thus attaches to it, and listeners of open ear will find it a more effective primer on twelve-tone technique than any prose I have encountered, especially if it is heard immediately after the *Opus 7* and immediately before the ensuing works. The *Opus 30* and *Opus 37* are, of course, full-fledged flowerings of Schoenberg's esthetic philosophy, which is to say among other things that they dispense altogether with traditional key relationships. As intellectual products the latter two are masterfully wrought. On paper they are as fascinating as a mathematical plotting of relativity, and that is no left-handed compliment. But as music—well, it is all a matter of definition. I happen to find these scores a source of endless and beguiling experience. I do not pretend to *appreciate* them in the sense that we employ that fuzzy verb day by day, nor do I insist that they are great works of art. But I think Schoenberg had something new to offer, and until I am convinced that I am impelled by masochism I propose to savor these discs whenever the inclination

presents itself, which has not been often enough as yet to do them full justice and, indeed, may never be. All of these generalities apply with equal force to the Berg and Webern essays, both of them offshoots of the same didactic ganglia. Any comparisons with the Kolisch recordings of two seasons ago are obviated by the patent superiority of the Juilliard ensemble. As to sound the newer discs are a vast improvement, too, but they could have been better balanced and the surfaces might have been quieter. Perhaps the engineers were unsettled by the music. Undoubtedly, in fact.

—James Lyons

Giesecking Plays

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in C minor, Op. 13; Sonata in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2;* Angel LP disc ANG.35025, \$5.95 or \$4.95. **BEETHOVEN:** *Sonata in F minor, Op. 57; Sonata in C, Op. 53;* Angel LP disc ANG.35024, \$5.95 or \$4.95. **SCHUMANN:** *Carnaval, Op. 9;* **MOZART:** *Sonata No. 14 in C minor, K.457; Sonata No. 15 in C, K.545;* Columbia LP disc ML-4772, \$5.95. All played by Walter Giesecking (piano).

▲IF your definition of "king of pianists" is that one artist plays more of the piano literature with greater illumination than anyone else, then I think you will agree with me (once you have heard these three outstanding discs as well as the Ravel-Debussy collection commented on elsewhere in these pages) that Walter Giesecking is right now second to none and very likely the greatest keyboard artist of today. Not only does Giesecking have a command of touch and tone surpassed by no one, he also has a capacity to differentiate between composer's styles that is really uncanny. How grand, how passionate, how tender, how firm is his molding of the grand lines of Beethoven's *Pathetique*, *Moonlight*, *Waldstein*, and *Appassionata* sonatas. There has been nothing with which to compare performances since Schnabel tackled them 20

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years ago. I am sorry there is so little space or I could dwell at length on the multitude of musical wonders Giesecking accomplishes. I must be content with mentioning only his weightless, crystalline limpidity of tone and the evenness of his scale in the pianissimo passages of the last movement of the *Waldstein*, how he makes music out of this section instead of allowing it to become the display vehicle it often seems. The nobility of Giesecking's singing tone in the theme and variations of the *Appassionata*, and his achievement of the last measure of boiling intensity produced with extraordinary control in the final movement of this work cannot go unnoticed.

Giesecking's fullness of tone at all dynamic levels, his immaculate articulation makes for a completeness of projection rare in lifetime of listening to records and attending concerts. This portion of Giesecking's art is remarkably vivid in his traversal of Schumann's great *Carnaval*. Not since Rachmaninoff have we had a recording which so faithfully gave us the mercurial spontaneity, the personal poetry of this unique example of 19th-century romanticism.

And Giesecking's Mozart! I can think of no one who has solved with greater satisfaction the difficult problem of equilibrating the left and right hand parts of Mozart's sonatas on a modern piano. Giesecking's balance is so secure (we can hear every line in its proper perspective) that one would think Mozart was completely familiar with 20th-century pianos and had designed his works for them. All the wondrous expressive values are also communicated in a way that makes them seem as natural as ordinary speech.

I have left the engineering values of these recordings to the last, for they require little comment. They are in all cases barely acceptable, but not a bit more. Most of them date from 1951 or thereabouts, except the Mozart *Sonata, K.457* which is a dubbing of the 1939 performance. One wishes there had been recording art to match the manifold artistic values ever present in these discs. But such is not the case. Listeners will, however, be poorer if sonic factors are allowed

to stand in the way of obtaining these thoroughly uncommon releases. —C.J.L.

Bach's "48"

BACH: *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I*, played by Isolde Ahlgrimm, harpsichord. Three Columbia LP discs, ML 4747/8/9, \$5.45 each, or SL 191, \$17.50.

▲THANKS to LP, we now have of the *Well-Tempered Clavier* three harpsichord versions, and one piano, more or less complete of the forty-eight *Preludes and Fugues*, that are honored more in reputation than in performance nowadays. The current release of Ahlgrimm's harpsichord version of Book I and Tureck's piano recording of the entire set should be the occasion of a far more comprehensive survey than is possible here.

Comparison of the Ahlgrimm and Landowska versions raises the moot question of the musicological authenticity of Landowska's way with Bach. Her tendency to render a phrase too freely, to vary from a strict tempo, and to take liberties in ornamentation, has come in for considerable criticism, especially from those concerned with musicological accuracy.

These critics of Landowska will be much happier with Ahlgrimm's new set, for she is quite the antithesis of Landowska, though still an excellent harpsichord technician. However, her readings are stiff, and metronomic in comparison to Landowska's. The latter has, for this listener at least, that last touch of gifted insight that makes it possible for her to render much of this music as a singing line and expressive phrase.

This latter state occurs too frequently with Ahlgrimm. Not even the most rabid Bachian will argue that all of the *Preludes and Fugues* are of equal fascination, but both Landowska and Tureck make more of them sound more vital than Ahlgrimm does.

Ahlgrimm uses a big and powerful instrument, considerably more sonorous

and, as recorded, rather too strong in tone. The use of the pedals is not strictly required by the Bach score, but it does add to the sonority of certain passages. The recording is clean and clear, with a wide frequency range. —Phil Hart

BACH: *The Well-Tempered Clavier* (complete); Rosalyn Tureck (piano). Book I, Decca LP set DS-127; Book II, DX-128, \$17.55 each.

▲THERE can be no excuse for such inferior reproduction as this in a day of technological wonders. How could so many things go wrong under controlled studio conditions? Before pursuing this tack I must emphasize that the performances themselves are, to these ears, simply wonderful. Without venturing willy-nilly into the unending argument over Bach-on-the-piano, I daresay that there is no more sensible and sensitive interpreter of this composer's keyboard works before the public today than the artist who essays the "forty-eight" in these volumes. From first to last she vouchsafes the most knowing penetration, and nowhere does any inner voice lose itself to the conception as a whole. Miss Tureck's finger work is extraordinary, and for all of this executive skill she never once de-emphasizes the essentially musical character of these four dozen little masterpieces. The accent is everywhere on warmth; she plays the faster ones a bit faster and the slower ones a bit slower than is usual but the *Gesellschaft* edition she employs is done no disservice withal. Stylistically she inclines to staccato, which will assuage the harpsichord partisans. One and all are commended to hear, if not to buy, this considerable virtuoso achievement. As to the recording itself, once again, it just will not do. If it had been made in a box car it would not sound worse, for the most part. From one moment to the next the quality varies so much that it is as if the artist kept changing instruments. A tarnished treasure, indeed.

—J.L.

French Modernism

JOLIVET: *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra; Andante for String Orchestra; Concerto for Trumpet, Piano, and String Orchestra*. Orchestre du Théâtre des Champs-Élysées conducted by Ernest Bour, with Lucette Descaves (piano), Roger Del Motte (trumpet). Westminster LP disc WL-5239, \$5.95.

▲THOUGH this recording (a product of Westminster's French affiliate Selmer) does not have the requisite amplitude and fullness, it is in all other ways thoroughly satisfactory. Best of all, it is the means by which we are able, for the first time on records, to study some of the work of André Jolivet, considered by many to be France's leading dodecaphonist. He has been a late-bloomer (he is almost 50 years old); and America did not hear of him until Munch performed his *Concerto for Ondes Martenot and Orchestra* in 1949. This composer's significance can be attributed to his successful attempt to mate the technical rigidity of the 12-tone rules of thumb with Latin grace and vitality. This was not always Jolivet's object as the beautiful *Andante for String Orchestra* of 1934 written in the shadow of Alban Berg so fully attests. But his postwar work bears testimony to this new and hopeful way out of an impasse. It would seem that Jolivet and the Italian Dallapiccola are the 12-tone men to watch.

I find the *Concerto for Trumpet, Piano and String Orchestra* ambitious but rather unsuccessful except in the expressive middle section. And that passage is something for the awakening neo-romantic movement. Jolivet's lively travel posters of Africa, the Far East, and Polynesia entitled a *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* are, on the other hand, completely winning. Of especial interest here is the orchestral coloring, the wonderfully varied rhythm (three separate sets of percussion are handled with vivid imagination), and a certain fiery grace unique to these

(Continued on page 174)

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Record Notes and Reviews

THERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Couper

Orchestra

ADAM: *Giselle*; L'Orchestre du Théâtre National de l'Opéra, Paris conducted by Richard Blareau. London LP disc LL869, \$5.95.

▲*GISELLE* is ballet's Hamlet and, as such, one of the great classic pillars of dance's treasure house. The kind of *Giselle* we in America are accustomed to (by way of performances by Ballet Theatre, Sadler's Wells, and Ballet Russe and recordings by the late Constant Lambert and Robert Irving) is apparently less dramatic than the character offered by the Paris Ballet. If one is to judge from Richard Blareau's interpretation, the French version has stronger contrasts between dance lyricism and dramatic action. This is made clear by the conductor's tempi which are far more unequal in speed (from one number to the next) than anything your reporter has ever before encountered. This has provided a source of welcome variety in the musical rendering of this fine, old-fashioned score and helps make the final result seem more vital than it has seemed in previous releases. Another source of interest is London's lively, resonant, and natural sounding recording. It fully substan-

tiates the real charm of a French orchestra playing a French score. For this taste, there are no more appealing sounds available anywhere else. —C.J.L.

BACH: *Four Suites for Orchestra*; Fritz Reiner conducting the RCA Victor Orchestra. RCA Victor LP set LM-6012, 2 discs, \$10.90.

▲**HAVING** attended a recording session when these suites were made, I have been interested in their arrival which, for reasons unknown, have been delayed a year. Reiner once performed the second suite with Columbia, which whet my appetite for his performances of all four. Using a small orchestra with harpsichord as in Bach's time, Reiner reveals himself a truer Bachian than Busch or Koussevitzky did. I was greatly impressed with his absorption with these scores during the recording session in which he re-did various sections to conform with desired results that he found had not been achieved in first efforts. The finished products, with their artful impetus and subtly detailed phrasing, are thoroughly satisfying. With the gifted Julius Baker as the flautist in the second suite and a correct ensemble, we have a performance of this work with which, at long last, musician and musicologist cannot quibble. And the third suite,

with its lovely *Air*, is equally as astisfying and in every way a preferable statement to the Weingartner. The recording is realistic in instrumental timbre and spaciousness, while the balance is well nigh perfect in the detailed correlation of the contrapuntal lines. —P.H.R.

BACH-WALTON: *The Wise Virgins*; **D. SCARLATTI-TOMMASINI:** *The Good-Humored Ladies*; the Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Franz Litschauer. Vanguard LP VRS-440, \$5.95.

▲ **MUSICAL** balletomanes have been getting their heart's desire of late. This latest recording of dance music couples two of the finest scores in the repertory. The performances are first class and the recordings quite brilliant, somewhat edgy in sound but not oppressively so. Vanguard's surfaces continue to crackle louder than most, unfortunately, so that the buyer who wants the Scarlatti might be better advised to acquire the Desormiere performance on the London label, which is coupled with Poulenc's *Les Biches*. But this is a first microgroove recording of Walton's wonderful transcription, and to some this fact will be more important than a modicum of extraneous noise. —J.L.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 3, Op. 55 ("Eroica")*; Wilhelm Furtwaengler conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. RCA Victor LP LHMV-1044, \$5.95.

▲ **WHILE** Furtwaengler remains one of the great orchestral technicians of our time, it is increasingly evident that his eccentricities in tempo are often willful distortions of the composer's wish. When this recording was issued in England in November 1948, the reviewer in *The Gramophone* said of the performance that "time and time again, his [Furtwaengler's] fluctuations of rhythm seem to be not only willfully imposed on Beethoven's score, but to devitalize the work in a curious way. Vigor—surely the keynote of the *Eroica*—gives way to indecision

and weakness." There are many strong competitors to this release—Toscanini's with its powerfully impelling force, Kleiber's with its vehement vigor, Schuricht's with its straightforward observance of the composer's intentions, and Walter's with its romantic warmth of feeling. In the cheaper editions, Leinsdorf's forceful and puissant reading remains a challenger though his orchestra is not in a class with those of the others. The present recording suffers from excessive reverberation which blurs much of the music's finer details. This may be due to the transfer from 78 rpm.

—P.H.R.

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 3 in F, Op. 90*; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Karl Boehm. London LL-857, \$5.95.

▲ **THIS** is the most mellow sounding performance of the Brahms *Third* on records, a quite different interpretation than we are used to in this country. Boehm lingers over the Autumnal shadows in the music, playing the first and last movements in a leisurely tempo quite different from most conductors. This decidedly romantic feeling for the music tends, in my estimation, to make the outer movements almost fall apart. The slow movement, lovely in sound, is more in character and the *Poco allegretto* is quite in character. Considering that London has a fine performance of this work, far better recorded, by Szell and the Concertgebouw Orchestra (LL-487)—in which the conductor affirms the strength of purpose of the outer movements—one wonders why this duplication was issued. In pacing of this symphony, Ormandy has always seemed to me preferable to all others on records, but his existent version does not serve that fine organization auspiciously. To date, Szell's performance remains my preference on LP.

—P.H.R.

CHERUBINI: *Pater Noster* (for solo violin and orchestra); **TARTINI:** *Sinfonia in A* (for strings and harpsichord); **LULLY:** *Marche pour le Régiment*

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du Roi (1670); **PHILIDOR** (L'ainé): *La Marche Royale* (1679); *La Marche pour le Roi de Chine* (1679); *Marche du Prince d'Orange* (1688); Jean Pougnet (violin), the London Baroque Ensemble conducted by Karl Haas. Decca 10" LP DL-4081, \$2.50.

▲HERE is a unique collection of forgotten pieces, every one of which is performed with that knowing assurance that has prevailed in the recordings of Haas and the London Baroque Ensemble. To split hairs, Cherubini's instrumental translation of the Lord's Prayer is not Baroque but Classical. It is a dignified meditation, appropriately restrained in its emotion. Pougnet's lovely tonal quality and artistic composure serves the music well. Tartini's *Sinfonia* in three short movements is a neat exercise of its kind. The other pieces, for military band, were written to celebrate various functions. The Lully is rather dull.

Philidor Senior, the head of a family of many musicians and also father of the famous chess player, wrote a lot of pieces like these at King Louis XIV's request to honor notable guests. A notch above the Lully march, they are nonetheless pieces belonging to history, with such singularly unattractive scoring as six oboes and a side drum.

—P.H.R.

COPLAND: *Appalachian Spring*; *El Salon Mexico*; the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. RCA Victor LP LCT-1134, \$5.72.

▲ONE's memory can play strange tricks, indeed. My earliest exposures to *Appalachian Spring* were in Boston's Symphony Hall, and the old 78 performance of it by Koussevitzky (which went the way of all shellacs a few years ago) had remained my ideal through thick and thin. Now it has been transferred to micro-groove, on the heels of several competitive versions, and I have to report (1) that it remains for me the most compelling of any I have heard and (2) that it is probably the least faithful of the lot to the indications of the printed score. If that

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paradox is too much for you, by all means choose the Vanguard coupling, which has better sound anyway. As to *El Salon Mexico*, I have said elsewhere that Bernstein equalled and perhaps outdid his mentor in the Columbia recording. Well, he didn't have the Boston Symphony at his finger-tips when he did so, and I find in renewing my acquaintance with the vintage BSO that this makes all the difference. The present disc is the one for me.

—J.L.

ELGAR: *The Wand of Youth Suite No. 1*; **WALTON:** *Facade Suite*; respectively the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent and the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Constant Lambert. Columbia LP ML-4793, \$5.95.

▲ODDLY enough you must forego the late Constant Lambert's finest original score (the ballet music for *Horoscope*) if you want to have his brilliantly witty conducting of *Facade*. The London disc that is this one's only competition is coupled with *Horoscope*; on that record Lambert conducts neither work. In this latest, however, we get not only Lambert's inimitable performance of *Facade* but an utterly captivating memento of the twelve-year-old Elgar. I hasten to add that this *Opus 1-A*, as it is catalogued, is one of two suites actually composed when Elgar was fifty. Their superstructure, nonetheless, was a series of incidental pieces for a children's play which the embryonic composer had scored for a "domestic orchestra." Too bad no one thought of coupling the later work with the early one, but that might be carrying enterprise to absurd lengths. Both of the present recordings are good, considering that they were made several years ago. But both leave something to be desired, reproductively.

—J.L.

FRANCK: *Symphony in D Minor*; L'Orchestre National de la Radio-diffusion Francaise conducted by André Cluytens. Angel LP 35029, \$5.95.

▲GETTING a new label under way perforce means much duplication, I suppose.

But I cannot quite see another Franck *Symphony* at this juncture, not on the heels of the magnificent Paray-Mercury version at any rate. Chyutens elicits a thoroughly adequate, typically French performance, thankfully with none of the vagaries that disfigured the recent Golschmann-Capitol interpretation. In terms of sound *per se* this latest is richly reverberant and generally admirable by current criteria, but it is not on a par with the sonic splendor of the aforementioned Mercury by any stretch of the imagination.

—J.L.

HAYDN: *Scherzando in F; Divertimenti a 6 Stromenti in E Flat, No.2 in A, and No. 3 in G;* the London Baroque Ensemble conducted by Karl Haas. Westminster LP WL-5227, \$5.95.

▲**QUITE** a wonderful composer, Haydn, even when he had nothing to say. This brace of lesser known lighter works is charming through and through. One imagines that the noblemen for whose delectation they were written must have been pleased no end by their diverting graces. What commends them to our attention is their occasional audacity, politely prophetic of the bold individuality that was to characterize the style of their author in later years. Haas gives these winning trifles just as much attention as he would the most formidable assignment, and Westminster, it goes without saying, has provided clean and balanced sound.

—J.L.

LISZT: *Dante Symphony;* George Sebastian conducting the L'Orchestre de L'Association des Concerts Colonne. Urania 7103, \$5.95. Also by Vienna Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by F. Charles Adler, Spa 44, \$5.95, and by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Alfred Wallenstein, Decca DL-9670, \$5.85.

▲**OF** LISZT's two symphonies, the *Faust* remains his all-around best effort and yet, as the late Ralph Hill in his book —*The Symphony*—says, "though the *Dante Symphony* is not the equal of the *Faust*

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in sustained inspiration, its many fine passages certainly place it among Liszt's best works." Liszt had a great affection for Dante which inspired not only this symphony but also a piano sonata. The latter seems to have survived in the concert hall better than the former. The symphony, based on Dante's *Divine Comedy* is in two sections. The first part is marked *Inferno* and the second *Purgatory* with a *Magnificat* coda or ending sung by a women's chorus. The latter section, with its religious implication, alters the whole character of what has gone before. The unhappy Paolo and Francesca are depicted in the last movement as Tchaikovsky later did (incidentally Tchaikovsky's score owes much to Liszt's).

Of the three performances, Sebastian handles the score with a musical honesty and assurance which is more rewarding than either of the other conductors. Wallenstein inflates the drama and misses the poetic quality of the lyrical sections. Adler's performance does not suggest the same preparation of the other two, and the orchestra does not play as well. Sebastian substantiates the vehemence of the opening movement without over-emphasis of its dramatic import, and the lyricism of the second movement without stress of its sentiment. It is unfortunate that the notes on the Sebastian disc are less conclusive than those on the others. The recording of all three is excellent, though I like less the character of sound from the Decca disc, preferring that of the Urania where the tonal quality of the French orchestra is more polished and especially pleasing in its woodwind playing.

—P.H.R.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Suites from Le Coq d'or and Tsar Saltan;* the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Issay Dobrowen. Angel LP 35010, \$5.95.

▲**THE** recent passing of Issay Dobrowen was a real loss to the phonophile. This recording, presumably one of his last, is exemplary in every way. As an engineering job it is head and shoulders above most European tapes, and the re-

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William Herbert—Tenor; Richard Standen—Bass;
London Philharmonic Choir; London Symphony Orchestra
conducted by HERMANN SCHERCHEN

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spective performances are wondrous in their evocation of the fanciful Pushkin tales that were their *raison d'être*. None of the microgroove competitors is a match for this *Coeq d'or*, not even Ansermet's or Désormière's (both of which are coupled with the *Capriccio Espagnol*). The *Tsar Sallan* is miles ahead of the Spruit and Donbrindt versions. It was from this opera, by the way, whence came the infamous *Flight of the Bumble Bee*. Rimsky did not include it in the symphonic suite, thank heaven. —J.L.

SCRIABIN: *Poem of Ecstasy*; **LISZT:** *Les Préludes*; the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Pierre Monteux. RCA Victor LP LM-1775, \$5.72.

▲IT is a real pity that Victor did not see fit to couple the Scriabin with one of his other works, as Columbia did last month with the same score. The Columbia recording offered, on the other side, *The Poem of Fire*; why Victor has to give us another *Les Préludes* passeth all understanding. On the face of it the latest disc cannot be gainsaid, however. Monteux is a sovereign conductor and nothing emerges from under his baton which is not close to perfection. Mitropoulos and Monteux did not perceive Scriabin's message in the same terms, needless to say. The former's is more impassioned, the latter's more compassionate, which is to say more musical. With the Liszt, too, Monteux manages to purge just enough of the fuss and fustian to make the score worth hearing for the thousandth time. The recorded sound is of course sumptuous. —J.L.

SIBELIUS: *Four Legends for Orchestra Op. 22 (Lemminkäinen Legends)*; The Danish State Radio Symphony Orchestra, Thomas Jensen conducting. London flrr LL-843, \$5.95.

▲THE FIRST and third of these pieces (as they are performed here) are quite unfamiliar to concert audiences, though the first, at least, ought to command a place in the repertory. It is entitled

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"Lemminkäinen and the Virgins from Saari"; and it describes—for those who follow the program notes—how the Finnish hero wins the most reticent of the young maidens of this romantic country. A broad, haunting melody is punctuated by outbursts from the brass and woodwinds that pour forth with an energy and inventiveness that are strongly reminiscent of the *A Minor Symphony*. Less so the third section ("Lemminkäinen in Tuonela"), which concentrates too heavily on string tremolo, and tends to sacrifice musical logic to mood. The work as a whole, with its more familiar sections ("The Swan of Tuonela" and "Lemminkäinen's Return"), is decidedly uneven. Thomas Jensen and the Danish orchestra give a thoroughly workmanlike performance (although the English horn in "The Swan" is not prominent enough). The recording, otherwise is satisfyingly realistic. —R.R.

J. STRAUSS-DORATI: *Graduation Ball*; New Symphony Orchestra conducted by Anatole Fistoulari. London LP disc LL883, \$5.95.

▲WHEN this ballet is carefully prepared and performed with high spirits, it is a delightful visual and musical experience. For one thing, its dramatic subject matter is rather fresh in the dance theatre; for another, its score is made from unfamiliar but thoroughly palatable pieces of the waltz king. The corpus of this musical material was ferreted out of manuscripts in the Vienna State Opera library by Antal Dorati and arranged in a most becoming manner. His adaptation sounds, has color and vibrancy. Anatole Fistoulari and his men perform the score with full recognition of its qualities, and London has aided them with one of their heartiest recordings. The result is a disc of great charm. —C.J.L.

STRAUSS, Johann & Josef: *12 Polkas*; Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Anton Paulik. Vanguard LP 438, \$5.95.

▲THESE dances, originally written for use in Viennese ballrooms, may not

incite present-day folks to any urge to dance since the polka is no longer in vogue. But they certainly offer a type of diversion which unbuttons the depressed or tired spirits of the listener. No formal patterns to tease a tired mind, only effervescent rhythmic patterns to gladden the spirit. This is a type of record which every listener should have around. There have been quite a few issued to date, but none with the realistic qualities of the present one. Just listen to Brother Johann's *Feuerfest Polka* (side 1, no. 1) or his famous *Trilsch-Tratsch* (side 2, no. 1)—if you're a hi-fi fan you'll grab the record immediately. It's that kind of a job. But there's more to the disc than that, for Prof. Anton Paulik has the "feel" of this music through long experience. The selection of the twelve polkas is said to have been made by the conductor and the orchestra men themselves "as their special favorites among the hundreds of polkas written by the Strauss brothers." Since all concerned are Viennese-born and bred, their selection has a special significance. —J.N.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Aurora's Wedding; Humoresque, Op. 10, No. 2 and Solitude, Op. 73, No. 6* (arr. Stokowski); Leopold Stokowski and his Symphony Orchestra. RCA Victor LP disc LM-1774, \$5.72. **TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Aurora's Wedding; GOUNOD: Ballet Music from Faust*; Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden, London conducted by Warwick Braithwaite. MGM LP disc E3052, \$4.85.

▲SINCE *Sleeping Beauty* was first produced in the nineties in St. Petersburg, there have been a welter of one-act versions invariably entitled *Aurora's Wedding*. A short volume would be required to list the numbers that have been used in the many productions the 20th century has witnessed. For the purposes of this review, suffice it to say that the MGM version is the last scene of the Sadler's Wells Ballet full-length version of *Sleeping Beauty* which many around our country have recently seen. The RCA Victor *Aurora's Wedding* is the music that

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Diaghileff used in his celebrated one-act version. It contains the introduction, the music for the seven sprites and the Lilac Fairy from the prologue, the dances of duchesses and marchionesses and a farandole from the hunting scene of the second act, and the last scene that MGM has issued.

The MGM recording has clarity and resonance and is a bit short on warmth of sound. The performances of both Tchaikovsky and Gounod by Braithwaite and his men are sound, well routine jobs that one encounters by regular attendance at good ballet theatres. The superb RCA Victor recording presents a gorgeous performance by Stokowski and his orchestra of Tchaikovsky's wonderfully appropriate and fanciful music that you will never come across anywhere else. It is completely unreal (no orchestra ever sounds like that) and, strangely enough, completely beautiful. Stokowski's affinity for this music was demonstrated in an earlier recording of more of *Sleeping Beauty* than he has given us here (why this version wasn't recorded instead of throwing in the bloated transcriptions of *Humoresque* and the weepy *Solitude* only heaven knows). On this occasion Stokowski has evoked all the excitement, all the glamour, all the impersonal tenderness one associates with the Petersburg Ballet. As I have said before, it's not anything you've ever heard before; it simply isn't real. But what a dream it is!

—C.J.L.

Concerto

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No.3 in C minor, Opus 37*, Rudolf Serkin, (piano) with Eugene Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. Columbia LP disc, ML 4738, \$5.45.

▲THIS concerto has, for one reason or another, not fared too well on discs, and this opulently recorded effort by Serkin and Ormandy is not a thoroughly decisive answer to our long-standing desire to hear justice done to one of Beetho-

ven's most interesting, as well as most beautiful, works. Serkin plays well, exceptionally well, but in that tense sort of style that can make his playing angular at times. There are such angular blemishes here—especially in the first movement where the music should flow more readily—and his slow movement is too fast, at least for one who still clings to Schnabel's literal reading of Beethoven's *Largo* indication.

There are now ten LP versions of this concerto. Of the lot, Clara Haskil offered the most intimately musical account of the solo part, but she was burdened by Swoboda's accompaniment. Arrau, also with the Philadelphians, played too much on the "surface." Bachaus and Kraus lacked overall musical coherence and impulse. Rubinstein and Moiseiwitsch, each in his own way, exploited the work for ends more personal than Beethovenian. And here now is Serkin, with a gorgeous piano tone, a superb accompaniment, and, most of the time, a reasonably sound projection of the music.



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In a concert we would all be shouting "Bravo!" but on records we have come to expect something more than just being a bit better than the others. —Phil Hart

BEETHOVEN: *Concerto No. 4 in G, Op. 58*; Artur Schnabel (piano) with Issay Dobrowen conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra. RCA Victor LCT-1131, \$5.45.

▲TO my way of thinking, the Schnabel-Stock version of this concerto, made in 1942, remains one of the greatest performances of this work on records. There was a rapport between these two musicians all too seldom manifested in concerto recordings. Had Stock lived longer, it is quite possible that Schnabel and he would have accomplished many more concerto performances. Whether the pianist was dissatisfied with his own work or simply willing at the behest of the English to undertake a new recording has never been revealed. Anyway, four years later, he made this performance which was hailed by English critics as the finest extant at the time. To even the score, the late Issay Dobrowen proved himself a well allied musical personality with the solo performer, better by far than Klemperer, who is allied to Novaes, or von Karajan, who is mated to Giesecking. But it is Schnabel's playing which holds the center of attention and in which poetic mellowness of rich maturity is evidenced. How beautifully he traverses the slow movement and how clearly etched is his playing of the finale! In that greatest of all Beethoven's concerto opening movements, Schnabel's subtle intensifications and deft detailing in phrasing are the results of long ripened artistry. Only, the cadenza at the end of the movement remains a blemish on an otherwise perfect performance. The recording has a mellowness of quality but it lacks a similar spaciousness and realism which the earlier Victor set possessed. Undoubtedly, this is due in part to the transfer from 78 rpm. As a memento of the pianist, it deserves a special niche in the record collections of all listeners who are not hypnotized by high fidelity.

—P.H.R.

BRAHMS: *Concerto in D Minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 15*; Clifford Curzon (piano) and the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam conducted by Eduard Van Beinum. London LP LL-850, \$5.95.

▲ONLY twice in my memory have I been moved, really moved, by this knotty work. Once was in Carnegie Hall, when the Philharmonic soloist was the late William Kapell. (I wonder if he ever made a recording of this music with some orchestra under the Victor aegis?) The second time was with the hearing of this spacious Curzon performance. It is perfectly poised, with just the right tempi to stave off the ever-threatening inundation of the work's inherent lyricism. The engineers have done nobly, and Van Beinum has proved himself an excellent accompanist as well as an otherwise competent conductor. Curzon plays with remarkable vigor, as is his wont, but none of the fine-spun filigree eludes him, either. I still don't like the first movement at all, but if I must suffer its interminable lengths I would rather hear it performed with conviction, as it is here. —J.L.

BRITTEN: *Diversions on a Theme for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 21* (Left Hand); Siegfried Rapp (piano) with Symphony Orchestra of Radio Berlin conducted by Arthur Rother; **STRAUSS:** *Burleske in D minor*; Elly Ney (piano) with same orchestra and conductor. Urania 7101, \$5.95.

▲BRITTEN's work was written in 1940 for Paul Wittgenstein, the one-armed pianist for whom Ravel wrote his left-hand concerto. While a singularly ingenious work, this is not one of Britten's most appealing compositions. Its theme, based on the two basic intervals of a fifth and fourth, is more a cerebral than an emotional device which results in music than is lacking in vehemence. Certain sections of the score like the *Nocturne*, *Badinerie*, *Toccata* and *Taranella* are arresting, but on the whole the work seems overlong. The scoring is most effective, the piano writing cleverly adept



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Franz Holatcheck, piano. LD-9075

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but less compelling than Ravel's. The performance seems to be a well prepared one with some excellent piano playing by Siegfried Rapp, though I suspect Wittgenstein might well do better.

Strauss' *Burleske*, with its tongue-in-the-cheek grotesquerie and humor, has been recorded twice before, but it remained for Elly Ney to give us its best performance to date. Mme. Ney has long been identified with this score; she handles its broad phrasing as well as anyone I have ever heard, and reveals a sympathy with the music which must have delighted Strauss. Though she does not eschew the "unabashed sentimentality" of the music, she does not make it as obviously trite as some pianists do. Rother and the Berlin Radio Symphony turn in one of their better performances in honor of Mme. Ney. And Urania's engineers have handled the recording in both the Strauss and Britten exceptionally well; there is clarity of line, wide range and exceptionally good tonal quality.

—P.H.R.

DISTINGUISHED CONCERTI for Wind Instruments. Vol. I—Concerto for Clarinet, Op. 57 (Carl Nielsen); Louis Cahuzac with John Frandsen conducting the Copenhagen Royal Opera Orchestra. Columbia 10" ML-2219, \$4.50. **Vol. II—Concerto for Oboe and Strings (Cimarosa-Benjamin);** *Sinfonia from Easter Oratorio (Bach-Whittaker);* *Concerto for Oboe and Strings (Marcello);* *Concerto in A major for Oboe d'amore, Strings and Continuo (Bach-Tovey);* *Concerto Grosso in G minor, Op. 3, No. 10 (Handel);* Leon Goossens (oboe) with Sir Malcolm Sargent and Basil Cameron conducting the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Walter Susskind conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra. Columbia ML-4782, \$5.95. **Vol. III—Horn Concerto in E flat, Op. 11 (Strauss);** Denis Brain with Alceo Galliera conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra; *Concerto for Oboe and Orchestra (Strauss);* Leon Goossens with same conductor and orchestra. Columbia ML-4775, \$5.95.

▲HERE we have a roundup of some exceptionally fine concerto performances previously issued by one of Columbia's European affiliates. All these recordings derive from 78-rpm discs made in the last four years. The quality of the reproduction is musically fine in all cases though the sound is not truly high fidelity.

Here, performance and musical values weigh in the balance with reproduction that serves all concerned efficaciously if not auspiciously.

Nielsen's *Clarinet Concerto* (first issued in 1949) reveals the fertility of his imagination and his ability to score effectively. The solo instrument is masterfully exploited. The performance is excellent, though the clarinetist tends to be overly intense on occasion. The work grows on one with repeated hearings. Arthur Benjamin's concerto for oboe, devised on melodies of Cimarosa, is already available on LP in a performance by Mitchell Miller. Here, aided by a better orchestral accompaniment, the singularly gifted Leon Goossens gives unalloyed pleasure in a wholly delightful opus. One can hardly quarrel with the Bach arrangements which follow, for both are well served by Mr. Goossens' fine artistry. The redoubtable Tovey was of the firm belief that Bach's *Clavier Concerto in A* was originally intended for the oboe d'amore, so he re-arranged the work accordingly. Performed by an artist like Goossens, one finds it exceedingly difficult to dispute Tovey. After all, Bach did recast his various concertos for more than one instrument and in this case the oboe d'amore serves the music more delectably than the harpsichord. Marcello's concerto, written at the turn of the 18th century, reflects the poetic equanimity of its era. There are two other performances of this work on LP but neither has the polished playing in the solo part that Goossens brings to the music. As a final offering, Handel's more familiar third oboe concerto favorably rounds up Mr. Goossens' distinctly worthwhile concert.

The two Richard Strauss works date from his nineteenth and eighty-first years. The *Horn Concerto*, decidedly

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reminiscent of Brahms, was the work of a student who was adroit but not always at ease in the classical forms. It is redeemed by the beautiful playing of Mr. Brain, whose technical assurance and ease makes light of its difficulties. The *Oboe Concerto* is cut from a different piece of cloth, recalling in its rococo style the music of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. How delightfully buoyant and youthful sounding this music of the older man is. Goossens handles his assignment with exquisite ease but the orchestral accompaniment is less well played. —P.H.R.

HINDEMITH: *The Four Temperaments*;
SHOSTAKOVICH: *Concerto in C Minor for Piano, Trumpet and Strings*; Victor Aller (piano) and Mannie Klein (trumpet) with the Concert Arts String Orchestra conducted by Fleix Slatkin. Capitol LP P-8230, \$5.70.

▲**INGENIOUS** coupling, splendid performances and Capitol's best engineering conspire to make this disc a rare bargain. The scores are uniquely compatible in that they are about the only ones by the respective composers which disclose a sense of humor, among other felicities. There are good recordings of both works extant, but this one should get your vote if you don't happen to own either the Columbia version of the Shostakovich (with the Prokofiev *Third Piano Concerto*) or the Westminster version of the Hindemith (with the *Violin Concerto* from *Kammermusik*). —J.L.

RAVEL: *Concerto in G* and *Concerto in D for the Left Hand*; Jacqueline Blancard (piano) with L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. London LP disc LL-797, \$5.95. **RAVEL:** *Concerto in G*; **FAURE:** *Ballade in F sharp*; Marguerite Long (piano) with the Paris Conservatory Orchestra conducted by Georges Tzipine (in the Ravel) and Andre Chuytens (in the Faure). Angel LP disc ANG.35013, \$4.95 or \$5.95.

▲**STUNNING** is the only word to describe the realism of the new London release, January, 1954

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cording. At an earlier date the Angel would have been special; now its engineering is merely efficient. Such is the rapidity of the phonograph's technical progress these days. Aside from sonic appeal, the better performance of Ravel's delightful *Concerto* (for two hands) is clearly Swiss designed, and by that I mean Ansermet. Blancard is serviceable but scarcely memorable (I remember a recording by Nicole Henriot that was something to remember but it was so poorly recorded London has withdrawn it). Long's work is heavy and has little of the sparkle of her playing twenty years ago. But she still knows how the lovely Faure *Ballade* goes and can show you. Tzipine and Cluytens' skills are sufficient for their tasks.

What seems unusually worthwhile is the way Blancard and Ansermet work together in the *Left Hand Concerto*. Painstakingly prepared, cooperatively presented, this piece takes fire in a way I have not encountered since the 78s of Cortot and Munch. Casadesu may have been more effective in the piano part in his Columbia performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra, but he had little in common with from Ormandy. I warmly recommend this new performance to music lovers and, of course, hi-fi fans.

—C.J.L.

Chamber Music

BACH: *Sonatas for Flute and Harpsichord—No. 1 in B minor, No. 2 in E flat, No. 7 in G minor;* Poul Birkelund and Finn Videro. Haydn Society LP 3067, \$5.95.

▲THE poised artistry of these two Danish players is beautifully recorded with fine clarity of line though the balance is in favor of the flute. The set of Bach's seven sonatas issued by Vox (PL-5150), performed by the French players Fernand Caratge and Marcelle Charbonnier, offer strong competition to this new disc. The recording in the Vox set is equally as clear and realistic—almost too much

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so at times with its consistent reminder of the flutist's breath, with better balance between the instruments and a richer and fuller tonal quality to the harpsichord. Caratge has more tonal vibrato than Birkelund, which seems to give more continuity of line in his playing. Stylistically, both flute players are equally praiseworthy, though in matters of tempi the two are not in agreement. Thus, in the opening *Andante* and the final *Presto* of the *B minor*, Birkelund's pacing is much slower than Caratge's. The Danish players favor a slightly slower tempi throughout these works than do the Frenchmen, but I must confess that the latter keep the music flowing in a manner that is most agreeable to my ears. Anyone not desiring all seven sonatas will not make a mistake in purchasing this latest disc, which contains three of the best works performed with classical restraint and exceptional purity of tone by the flutist.

—P.H.R.

BRAHMS: *Sonatas in F, Op. 120, No. 1 and in E flat, Op. 120, No. 2;* Leopold Wlach (clarinet) and Joerg Demus (piano). Westminster LP WL-5236, \$5.95.

▲THESE sonatas contain some of the most eloquent and expressive music in the clarinet repertory. The first contrasts with the second in the number, order and character of movements. Beginning with a bold *Allegro appassionato*, somewhat elderly in spirit, the *F major* melts into an *Andante* of lyrical and reflective tenderness, and proceeds to a third and a fourth movement which are both buoyant in spirit and highly inventive. The *E flat*—containing only three movements—is simpler in design, and ending with a set of variations marked *Andante*. Its short and noble *scherzo* looks ahead in spirit to the *Four Serious Songs*. Though the Kell-Horszowski versions, reviewed in June 1950, were praised for stylistic sophistication they left room for a broader and more robust approach to this music, which is fulfilled here. Though I do not own the former release, I can recommend

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this one without reservation. Wlach's tone is warm, sensitive and fluent; his playing technically superb. Demus, like the clarinetist educated in the Viennese tradition, plays his part splendidly with welcome tonal warmth. Westminster's recording is excellent.

—R.R.

BRAHMS: *Trio in B, Op. 8*; Jean Fournier (violin), Antonio Janigro (cello) Badura-Skoda (piano). Westminster LP WL-5237, \$5.95.

▲THIS early work of Brahms, revised in later years, is hardly one of his greatest chamber works, yet it has a certain appeal in its recall of "the simplicities of German folk-song that Brahms so dearly loved and so minutely studied," as Daniel Gregory Mason has said. Its performance by Heifetz, Feuermann, and Rubinstein was an inflated, virtuosic affair, badly recorded. The present performance offers better integrated artistry and a resulting lyrical expressiveness which is in keeping with the youthful spirit of the music. Judging from this and previous performances of these players it would seem that Westminster has found the ideal group for performance of the famous lyrical trios of the 19th century. The recording, it seems needless to say, is excellent in every respect, without the rattles that beset the earlier three-star Victor edition.

—P.H.R.

SCHUBERT: *Quintet in A, Op. 114* ("The Trout"); Adrian Aeschbacher (piano), members of the Koeckert Quartet and Franz Ortner (double-bass). Decca LP disc DL-9707, \$5.85.

▲MUSICALLY and mechanically viewed, this project is downright anemic compared with the heavenly Westminster issue (WL-5025) which features the superlative Schubert ensemble player Paul Badura-Skoda. The *Trout Quintet*, in spite of its many lovely measures, is a rambler and can get to be interminable if it is not kept lively in rhythm, varied in tone, and if the players do not perform in consanguineous accord. In spite of some deft work by the performers here

and obvious understanding of the music's expressive content, there is little communication of the robust spirits, tenderness, and spontaneity that is the glory of the *Trout Quintet*.

—C.J.L.

SCHUBERT: *Rondo in A for Solo Violin and String Quartet*; Anton Kamper (solo) with Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet; *Trio Movement in B flat*; *String Trio in B flat*; Members of the Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet. Westminster LP WL-5223, \$5.95.

▲SCHUBERT's *Rondo* was previously recorded by Solovieff, Swoboda and the Vienna State Opera Orchestra (Concert Hall 1176) (see review page 390, August 1953). Since the work has always been called a miniature violin concerto, there was some justification in using a larger orchestra. However, Schubert conceived the work for solo violin and string quartet and it loses, in the orchestral version, some of the intimacy of its lovely charm which is substantiated here. The *Trio Movement in B flat* is an early piece,



RICHARD TUCKER in Celebrated Tenor Arias!

Richard Tucker, regarded by many as the world's greatest tenor, sings 11 famous and favorite arias. With the Orch. of the Met. Opera Assn. Fausto Cleva, cond. Exclusively on Columbia "Lp."

dating from 1816, markedly influenced by Haydn. The *String Trio in B flat*, dating from a year later, also shows the influence of Haydn but with many Schubertian touches that point ahead. These works are well played by the Konzerthaus ensemble and excellently recorded.

—P.H.R.

SCHUBERT: *String Quartets No. 6 in D* and *No. 9 in G minor*. Westminster LP WL-5224. *String Quartets No. 10 in E flat* and *No. 11 in E*, *Op. 125*, Nos. 1 and 2, Westminster LP WL-5222, \$5.95. Played by Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet. \$5.95 each.

▲FOLLOWING its performances of Schubert's early quartets, the Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet bring us four more of these works. Nos. 6 and 10 derive from the composer's sixteenth year, No. 9 from his eighteenth and No. 11 from his nineteenth years. The influences of Haydn and Mozart prevail in the first two quartets, especially Mozart's, yet they have a charm of their own. In the latter quartets there is more originality with the *E major* opening up for the first time that true world of "warm lyricism" and romantic songfulness that prevailed in Schubert's chamber music thereafter. No admirer of Schubert will wish to miss these discs, in which the Vienna Konzerthaus perform with unusual spirit and vehemence. Westminster's superb recording honors the players' enthusiasms.

—P.H.R.

Voice

BACH: *Cantata No. 51*, "Jauchzet Gott in Allen Landen"; "Sheep May Safely Graze" from *Cantata No. 208*; "My Heart ever Faithful" from *Cantata No. 68*; Elisabeth Schwartzkopf (soprano) with Peter Gellhorn conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra; *Cantata No. 82*, *Ich Habe genug*; Hans Hotter (Baritone) with Anthony Bernard and same orchestra. Columbia ML-4792, \$5.45.

▲COLUMBIA may well be proud of this splendid record both artistically and reproductively. The Philharmonia Orchestra sounds unusually well, and the two conductors, Peter Gellhorn and Anthony Bernard, show that they are fully aware of how Bach's music should be played. Elisabeth Schwartzkopf, who has done some fine things on records, of late, again comes through with a top-notch performance, proving that she is one of today's most resourceful singers—a vocal artist worthy of respect. This is very difficult music to sing well. Both in coloratura passages—which abound and take the singer without pause and hesitation to high C—and in legato portions, Mme. Schwartzkopf comes through like the real stylist she assuredly is.

On the reverse face we find Hans Hotter's dignified, if somewhat breathy and hollow baritone employed a different type of cantata. Though he cannot match Mme. Schwartzkopf when it comes to freshness of voice, he does stand a comparison in style without any loss to his considerable prestige. There is dignity and deep understanding in this performance.

It would be nice to have enough space to mention in detail the various excellent instrumental soloists; it must suffice to report that they add to the authenticity of this admirably recorded disc.

—M. de S.

BACH: *Saint Matthew Passion*; Soloists. Akademie Kammerchor, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Ferdinand Grossmann. Vox LP set PL-8283, 3 discs, \$17.85.

▲THIS, the third LP release of Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion*, has much to offer with its honest musicianship. Like its predecessors, the singers are all capable and intelligent with pleasing voices, and the well-trained choir acquits itself satisfactorily. The conductor, a thoroughly reliable and sensitive Bach interpreter, does not indulge in the capricious fluctuations of tempo or the dramatic exaggerations of Mengelberg. On the other hand, he does not achieve the inspired unification of ensemble and communicative

devotion of Scherchen. Both Mengelberg and Scherchen instill in their participants a greater expressive intensity. Theirs is a more absorbing dedication to the musical drama of Bach's great score, though of the two Scherchen remains closest to the great Bach tradition. Grossmann's performance is a thoroughly competent one but not similarly inspired. It is closer to the spirit of the 19th century than to Bach's time. The present recording is well balanced and realistic but not as rich in sound as the Westminster's. The Columbia recording dates from 1939.

—J.N.

JUSSI BJOERLING IN SONG: *Die Forelle*; *Die Allmacht*; *Staendchen*; *Wanderers Nachtlid*; *Die boese Farbe* (Schubert); *Die Mainacht* (Brahms); *Es muss ein Wunderbares sein* (Liszt); *Verborgenheit* (Wolf); *En svane*; *En drom* (Grieg); *Staendchen*; *Morgen* (Strauss); *Svarta rosor* (Sibelius); *Tonerna* (Sjoeborg); *Lilacs* (Rachmaninoff); *Ideale* (Tosti); Jussi Bjoerling (tenor) and Frederick Schauwecker (piano). RCA Victor LP LM 1771, \$5.72.

▲BJOERLING'S success in the opera has been due to his almost unique ability to do justice to the long lines of Italian melody without undue emotionalizing. He has had success as a recitalist, too, though inevitably his long years on the lyric stage have not developed in him the kind of intimacy that is the highest aim of lieder-singing. For that reason the more outspoken and dramatic songs in this recital fare the best; his voice (beginning to show some signs of its long service) has its familiar ring in the louder rather than the softer songs. It seems odd that he should open his program with *Die Forelle*, which requires a lighter touch than most male singers can give it, especially as his fast tempo suggests rather limited enthusiasm. *Die Allmacht* is properly big and broad, yet a little loose rhythmically, somehow not sufficiently intense. *Staendchen* and the peaceful *Wanderers Nachtlid* are sung out; the best of the Schubert group is *Die boese Farbe*, and a rousing best it is,

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though I might question here and elsewhere his use of *portamento*. *Die Mainacht* is treated with care, but Bjoerling is one of the few singers who can ride over its long phrases with ease.

Turning to the Scandinavian songs, the singer takes on a new life: Grieg's *Swan* has the vocal softness missing in the German efforts, and he makes the most of the climax in *A Dream*. Sibelius' *Black roses* shows the tenor at his best, and Sjoeborg's song to music at his most imaginative—one does not often hear it spun out in this way.

The Rachmaninoff song is given in admirably distinct English. I could wish for a better balance with the piano in *Morgen*, in which song, too, the pianist strikes one strangely indefinite chord.

—P.L.M.

CHANT GREGORIEN: Choeur des Moines de l'Abbaye Saint Pierre de Solesmes. London set LLA-14, \$29.75.

▲ONLY the most confirmed devotees of Gregorian Chant, presumably, will be interested in so much of it as this heavy album includes. Others are commended to the Mount Angel Seminary recital, the several Period discs or the two-record Victor re-issue. The latter was sung by predecessors of the present Solesmes personnel, and I must say that the transfer to microgroove was effected with considerably more success than most. The sound in the present set is exceptionally good, with the tacit disclaimer that any monastery is somewhat less ideal than any recording studio, all things being equal. There is a rather too obtrusive resonance here and there, and a certain deadness of tone that might have been eliminated under controlled conditions. Withal, however, the engineers did very well indeed. The singing is of course *nonpareil*, in the finest Solesmes traditions. The accompanying booklet, prepared by Justine Bayard Ward from the French edition of Dom Joseph Gajard, is replete with musical examples and authoritative background on the history and liturgical propriety of Gregorian Chant.

—J.L.

OFFENBACH: *Orphée aux enfers* (abridged); Claudine Collart (Eurydice), Claude Devos (Orphée), Michel Roux (Jupiter), Raymond Saint-Paul Chorus and Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Jules Gressier. Vox LP PL 21200, \$5.95.

▲TO MANY of us *Orpheus in the Underworld* has always existed simply as an overture, the only work we knew by Offenbach besides *The Tales of Hoffman*. To see any of his light operas done properly on the stage is too much to hope, unless we travel, for such things do not take well to translation, and such attempts as I have witnessed in New York have been hopelessly entangled in the Broadway traditions. LP is helping this situation, for now we can hear (if we cannot see) French light opera produced by the French for the French, and a heartening experience it is. *Orpheus* now appears for the second time. The first recording, made under Leibowitz, is complete except for the overture (Renaissance SX 204); this abridgement has at least the tail end of this most famous number by way of introduction. Of course, most of the thematic material announced by the orchestra later makes its appearance in the score. Which of the two versions one will prefer depends on how much of the music one wants to hear; most of the best will be found in this abridgement, and some listeners will not want all the spoken dialogue. The two recordings share the same Euridice, and a charming singer she is. For the rest, all are good, with the edge going to the Leibowitz performance partly because of his spirited conducting and partly because the reproduction is a bit better. I have the impression that the singers are too close in the new performance, whereas in the old they seem to be singing in a large hall.

—P.L.M.

A LIEDER RECITAL: *Sonntag; Schummerlied; Nebel; Die Liebe hat gelogen* (Franz); *Die Nacht; Liebesglueck; Ob auch finstre Blicke glitten; Morgenstimmung* (Wolf); *Lied eines Schmiedes; Meine Rose; Kommen und Scheiden;*

Die Sennin; Einsamkeit; Der schwere Abend (Schumann); *Blauer Sommer; Wenn!; Weisses Jasmin; Stiller Gang* (Strauss); Marjorie Schloss (soprano) and Jonathan Brice (piano). International Record Collectors Club LP, L-7000, \$5.95.

▲IRCC herewith departs from its usual paths among the great of other days, turning attention to a singer whose career would seem to be before her. Miss Schloss, a native of Memphis, Tennessee, was a pupil of the late Edyth Walker. She seems to have preferred teaching to public singing, for she worked several years as Miss Walker's assistant, and only last season got around to giving her first New York recital. The press notices were so encouraging that she will unquestionably be heard from again. Meanwhile, here is a good sample, evidence enough to substantiate her claims as one of the best present-day lieder-singers. Her program has been chosen with the greatest care, avoiding the obvious, and introducing to LP several such lovely things as Franz' *Schlummerlied* (to the text of Brahms' *Ruhe, Suessliebchen*), Wolf's *Morgenstimmung* (a strong contrast to the familiar Henschel setting), Schumann's *Meine Rose* and Strauss' *Blauer Sommer*. The voice itself is perhaps best described as satisfying—it would be dangerous to speculate as to its natural power on the evidence of recordings alone, and obviously this is not the important thing. What matters is that her well-controlled instrument is at the service of the composers. This is the kind of recorded song-recital that has real value; let us hope there will be more of them.

—P.L.M.

SONG RECITAL: *Frauenliebe und Leben* (Schumann); *An die Musik; Ganymed* (Schubert); *Von ewiger Liebe; O wüsst ich doch den Weg zurück* (Brahms); *Ich liebe dich; Ruhe, meine Seele* (Strauss); *At parting* (Rogers); *Morning* (Speaks); *We have turned again home* (McArthur); *When I have sung my songs* (Charles); Kirsten Flagstad

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(soprano) and Edwin McArthur (piano).
RCA Victor LP LM 1738, \$5.72.

▲I SUPPOSE we should approach this disc in a rather special way, for clearly it is a family affair—a memorial to Flagstad's farewell recital in Carnegie Hall, with the faithful Edwin McArthur at the piano, and with intimate notes provided by Bernard Miles, the friend for whose Mermaid Theatre she sang her famous Dido. There can be few who will hear it today who have not known Flagstad in her prime, at least by way of her more famous recordings. Still, one wonders what future generations will think if they come upon this recital unprimed—will they listen as hard as we in our time have done to the records left by the aging Patti for every vestige of the singer's greatness? Mr. Miles does not help the situation in denying that "her voice has lost any of its youthful glory."

The program itself might have been better chosen. One wishes she had not added another to the long list of *Frauenliebes*, for what this cycle requires was never her stock in trade. Furthermore, Mr. Miles tells us she only sang the songs in public twice at the end of her career. This is the major item on a program which does not include one of the Norwegian songs in which she always excelled! But more unfortunate is her choice of such a song as the Strauss *Ich liebe dich*, in which her trumpet tones must have been magnificent twenty, or even ten years ago. These things no longer come easily. Finally, Mme. Flagstad has not been well advised in her choice of English songs, even though that well-worn encore *At Parting* elicits some of the best singing on the program. Those to whom the music is at least as important as the singer will find it hard to span the gap between *Ganymed* and *When I Have Sung my Songs*. —P.L.M.

A RECITAL OF GERMAN LIEDER AND ARIE ANTICHE: *Widmung*; *Die Lotosblume*; *In der Fremde* (Schumann); *Der Musensohn*; *Du bist die Ruh*; *Erlkönig* (Schubert); *Vezzosselle*
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e care pupille (Falconieri); *Ah, mio core* (Handel); *Chi vuol la zingarella* (Paisiello); *Amarilli mia bella* (Caccini); *Se Florindo e fedele* (Scarlatti); *Lasciatemi morire* (Monteverdi); *Intorno all' idol mio* (Cesti); *Già il sole del Gange* (Scarlatti); Irma Kolassi (mezzo-soprano) and Jacqueline Bonneau (piano). London LP LL-747, \$5.95.

▲MISS KOLASSI's first disc, devoted to songs in French and her native Greek, created a mild sensation a year or so ago. In the repertoire therein presented she was thoroughly schooled and by nature congenial. Now roving afield into Italian and German, she reveals her limitations. In neither language does the voice sound at home, and there is more shrill tone than there should be. On the other hand, she is a musical and intelligent artist, and in several of the songs she does capture and sustain a mood—for instance *Intorno all' idol mio* and *In der Fremde*. But neither lieder nor classic arias can be done by intelligence alone. —P.L.M.

RICHARD TUCKER SINGS CELEBRATED TENOR ARIAS from *La Traviata*, *Andrea Chenier*, *L'Africana*, *Faust*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *La Boème*, *La Gioconda*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*; Mr. Tucker with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra conducted by Fausto Cleva and Emil Cooper. Columbia LP ML-4750, \$5.45.

▲EVERY one of these nine arias—recorded in December 1952 and June 1953—shows an admirably high level of performance. Though Tucker is better suited for some roles than others, he sings everything with distinction. Freedom, secure sense of line, and a careful grasp of style in both Italian and French selections are more apparent in Tucker's singing today than ever before.

Tucker is at his best in the arias that are most comfortably sung by a *spinto* (medium-heavy) voice. Outstanding are "Come un bel di di maggio," "Cielo e mar," and the complete scene from "Un

Ballo," beginning "Ma se m'e forza perdeti." Here, and again in the "Air de fleur" from *Carmen*, he displays splendid breath control on the high, sustained passages. He can be brilliant, as in "O Paradiso," or sensitive and lyrical, as in "Che gelida manina" and in "Una furtiva lagrima." The tendency to push his voice in the upper register, which marred some of his earlier singing, is scarcely in evidence here. Personally, I prefer a lighter voice in the *Traviata*, *Bohème* and *L'Elisir* arias. The recording is exceptional for realistic presence of singer and orchestra. The accompaniments, especially those by Fausto Cleva reveal a rich degree of musicianship and understanding.

—R.R.

WAGNER: *Die Goetterdaemmerung—Funeral March and Immolation Scene; Tristan und Isolde—Prelude, Liebesnacht and Liebstd; Philadelphia Orchestra* conducted by Eugene Ormandy with Margaret Harshaw as Bruennhilde. Columbia LP ML-4742, \$5.45.

▲AFTER nine seasons at the Metropolitan as a reliable mezzo-soprano, Margaret Harshaw made an amazing transition to a full-fledged dramatic soprano in 1950. Since her first Senta, Miss Harshaw has come a long way, and much of the evidence of her progress lies in this record. Against the massive sonorities of the Philadelphia Orchestra her voice may lack the Olympian coolness and serenity of Flagstad or the blazing intensity of Traubel in her prime, but this singer does display a splendid sense of line, keen musicianship, and secure placement. Further than that, she shows a good deal of feeling for the words, recalling in this Frida Leider. Miss Harshaw negotiates the final vocal hazards with increasing confidence. While her expressive range is somewhat limited, given further association with this music, she should develop greater intensity and expressive command. Among the newer Wagnerian sopranos, hers is unquestionably a most promising future.

Ormandy begins the *Goetterdaemmerung* music with Siegfried's "Funeral March."

The orchestral sound is magnificent, though I found the opening of the March somewhat heavy in the bass. Ormandy's conception of this music, however, is too casual for my liking. In the music from *Tristan*, clear articulation and musical detail are sometimes lost in the sumptuous welter of sound. From the *Prelude*, this sequence moves into the "Liebesnacht" beginning with "O sink' hernieder, Nacht der Liebe" and by some strange and disturbing transformation—works its way into the "Liebestod." Miss Harshaw, unfortunately, was not around when the latter was made.

—Richard RePass

French Modernism

(Continued from page 156)

ears. Lucette Descaves and Ernest Bour should be singled out for their unusual liveliness and sensitivity to this music. Though I appreciate the fabulous difficulties of the solo part in the concerto for trumpet, M. Del Motte does let us down a bit in matters of breath support with a resulting weakness here and there in the appropriate curve of a phrase.

—C.J.L.

LP Re-Issues

(Continued from page 144)

ing is far more realistic and effective than the original 78-rpm one. Verdi's *Falstaff* (Entré set EL-8) features the late Giacomo Rimini, Pia Tassinari, Ines Alfani Tellini, Roberto D'Alessio, Salvatore Baccaloni, Giuseppe Nessi and others. What seemed a lifeless performance on 78 rpm is somewhat redeemed by modern engineering; indeed Rimini's vocal richness is enhanced, though he is not quite the Falstaff that Taddei is in the Cetra set. This too is a competent performance, with some good and some bad singing.

Entré disc RL-3093 offers Highlights from Thomas' *Mignon*, brightened by modern engineering like a chandelier with new lights. Germaine Cernay is a lovely Mignon and the balance of the cast are capable French artists. It is a pity in this re-issue that restoration of the two discs left out from the original French set in the earlier 78 rpm domestic release was not made. To some, the omission of the *Polonaise* and the *Berceuse* will be a disappointment.

The re-issue of the early Columbia *Tosca* with Bianca Scacciati, Alessandro Grandi and Enrico Molinari (Entré set EL-4) has its decided merits

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and demerits, though at its cost it is a better performance than its price competitor—Remington set 199-62. Granda is an all around reliable tenor with a pleasing voice and Molinari is a believable villian. Scacciati, a full-voiced Tosca, sounds better than she did in the original release, but her singing is marred by numerous inequalities. At that, she is better than Remington's Tosca.

Entre set EL-11 is a re-issue of the 1928 Bayreuth Festival excised performance of *Tristan and Isolde*. The orchestral playing is surprisingly realistic in sound for its period but the voices are overly prominent with the result that Nanny Larsen-Todsen's plangent soprano is often too realistic. It would have required a miracle to improve the unmusical voice of the tenor. Rudolf Bockelmann's Kurvenal and Ivar Andresen's King Mark are the best sung roles, far ahead of the exponents in more recent issues of this opera. Considering its source, this set has its historical interest.

Beecham Re-Issues

Beecham is represented on three Columbia re-issues with performances of four Mozart symphonies, one Haydn and one Schubert. The engineering varies, most being very heavy on the low end, which is not characteristic of Mozart's music in the concert hall, but all take on a glamor of sound not heard in the original releases that mostly date from the 1930s. The best of the five Mozart's is *Symphony No. 34, K. 338*, made in 1941, which actually sounds as though it were accomplished recently. Beecham's performance of this symphony (Columbia ML-4781) has no competitor in our estimation and its disc companion *Symphony No. 29, K. 201* has always had a place in our esteem though Maag's version (London LL-286) is more appealing in sound. *Symphony No. 35, K. 385* ("Haffner") and *Symphony No. 36, K. 425* ("Linz") (Columbia ML-4770) are fine examples of Beecham's uncanny feeling for Mozart's music though the best of the two remains the "Haffner," in which the noted conductor is more communicative. There is a strong competitor to Beecham's "Linz," played by the late Fritz Busch on HMV-1019, which is better recorded. There is strong competition from Scherchen (Westminster 5066) to Beecham's *Haydn No. 104* (the "London" Symphony) (Columbia ML-4771) but its companion, Schubert's *Symphony No. 5*, has rhythmic buoyancy and ingratiating charm which only a Beecham can bestow. Furthermore, this Fifth offers satisfyingly realistic sound.

The late Felix Weingartner is represented on LP by re-issues of Mozart's *Symphony No. 39, K. 543, Eine kleine Nachtmusik, K. 525* and Haydn's *Toy Symphony* on Columbia disc M-4776, four Johann Strauss Waltzes on disc ML-4777, and Brahms' *Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a*, and Bach's *Suite No. 3 in D* on disc ML-4783. In all these the heavily reverberant bass and the lack of dynamic graduations are a detriment to the conductor's artistry, yet the prevailing probity of his classical style in the Mozart, Haydn and Bach works offer enduring memories of a famous conductor. The Strauss waltzes vary in sound

but all are well played with a true Viennese urbanity.

Columbia's re-issue of Bronislaw Huberman's performance of the Beethoven *Violin Concerto* (ML-4769), with George Szell conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, is an amazingly realistic reproduction not without crudities of its period, which must be all of 25 years ago. The Polish violinist, a celebrated virtuoso in his time (1882-1947), is said to have used a steel-strung bow which provided a powerful tone. Endowed with great technical skill and amazing articulation, his penetrating musical absorption predisposed many in his favor when this concerto was first issued. Hence, its re-issue honors a historical landmark in the annals of the phonograph. While the performance is truly a compelling one, the violinist's lack of warmth and a truly appealing quality especially in the slow movement, leaves something to be desired.

The re-issue of the Sziget-Beecham performance of the Mendelssohn *Violin Concerto in E minor* (Columbia ML-2217) is quite different. A jewel in its day, it emerges from its LP re-issue like a refurbished gem. The ingratiating tone and superb musicianship of Sziget, happily allied to Beecham's sympathetic orchestral accompaniment, make this one of the great performances of the work on records.

Admirers of Weingartner will undoubtedly welcome the re-issue of his performance of Beethoven's *Triple Concerto, Op. 56* (Columbia ML-2218) which is excellently performed by all, but for us the recent Bruno Walter issue (ML-2059), with its greater warmth and better recording, is preferred.

Scala Records

In the realm of operatic arias by famous artists of the past, a new company—Scala Records—comes up with four LP discs—dubbings of old records by Chaliapin, Riccardo Stracciari, Emmy Destinn and Rosa Ponselle. While the sound is quite good, there is consistent reminder of old 78-rpm surface noise. Too, the pitch varies—especially in the Stracciari and Ponselle records—from that of the original 78s. The Chaliapin (Scala 801) offers early European recordings of arias from 10 operas sung in Russian, French and Italian. The Stracciari (Scala 802) has twelve selections most of which derive from original Italian acoustics. The noted baritone's voice, pitched a half key up, sounds thinner than it should but his vocal suavity is well evidenced in these selections from *Africana*, *Favorita*, *Pagliacci*, *Barbiere di Siviglia* (a duet is included from this opera with the famous lyric tenor Fernando Carpi), *Ernani*, *Don Carlo* and other Verdi operas. The Emmy Destinn (Scala 803) does not serve this great soprano as advantageously as the two-disc Classic release, which offers superior recording sound. The Ponselle (Scala 804) has twelve arias taken from the sopranos early Columbia records. In the originals, Ponselle did not sing the arias from *Tosca*, *Mme. Butterfly*, *La Boheme* or other operas a half key lower than written, as heard from this disc. However, the sumptuous vocal artistry of the singer nonetheless is still impressive.

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